

The date has been set for graduation it is June 20th at ConVal. Everyone hope for a beautiful day.

The month of April saw many well attended meetings in Francestown. On April 8th the People Interested in FES had an opportunity to publically provide over 60 members of the Francestown community some insight into why they have formed and some specific topics that they wanted to have addressed. During the meeting, there was a robust discussion by parents who are members of PIFES as well as parents from the PTO and interested members of our community. I am not going to review or address the specific items discussed at the meeting due to space limitations, but I wanted to let everyone know that the voices of Francestown have been heard loud and clear and you have succeeded in gaining the attention of both the Board and the SAU. While there have been other meetings and discussions in the past, some that involved small groups and others just individual parents, this was the first meeting that brought together multiple stakeholders, with differing views, concerns and agendas. What occurred that evening was an airing of some issues, some heated debates, and some tough words, but as we opened the meeting and I asked all in attendance to shake the hand of the person behind them and say "I am here because I care about FES," everyone was engaged in the process. I have often asked for engagement, and many times sat in the Library alone during the meet your representative night, but that night we certainly had a lot engaged individuals. I want to re-iterate for all of you, that the time has come for people to leave their baggage behind, wipe the slate clean and commit to move forward as we work together to make FES the best it can be. If people are willing to look to the future, and I believe that all in attendance were, then we are already in a better place. The meeting closed with my request to work closely with the newly create parent involvement team being formed by the end of April.

On April 13th FES hosted a meeting to discuss the Parent Involvement Team. Mary Ellen Stanley, in response to feedback she has been receiving decided to form the first ever Parent Involvement Team, or PIT. The PIT will function as a conduit to provide input to the school and be a voice representing you on all matters that relate to your school. The committee will be made up of school staff, and SAU administrator, a community member and parents. This meeting was held to review how the committee will be formed and to begin a discussion of the priority topics that they will need to take up once formed. In a great show of support for FES, the entire administrative team, all principles from across the District came and assisted by capturing input at each station and provided some perspective on various issues. The PIT will eventually be a District wide initiative and will be a great way to provide input to each school, to the District and to the Board. If you were unable to attend the meeting and want to provide input, please make sure to contact Mary Ellen for the names of the PIT members, or better yet, attend a meeting and let your voice be heard. I strongly urge anyone who has something they need to say, or an idea they want considered, approach the PIT and have them work on it on your behalf. Many of the items that the PIFES group wanted discussed, i.e. communication, curriculum nights, leadership, etc, we posted on sheets of paper and the 30 people in attendance were asked to vote for their most important item. The tallied results were not available at press time, but they will serve as the initial items for the PIT to address. I

would like to ask all of us to support this newly created group and give them a chance to represent us at FES. Please make sure to provide the PIT members as well as myself any feedback as they get up and running.

On April 15th Mary Ellen Stanley and the staff of FES hosted an informational night to provide an update on the multi-age plans for the next school year. This was the first opportunity for parents to get a more detailed explanation of how the multi-age classrooms will be run next year. There was a lengthy discussion of how the children will be placed next year. Many factors will be taken into account and input will be received from the children, their parents and teachers. Emphasis will be placed on both scholastic as well as social development. We also had a series of discussions about how a teacher would instruct individual students, small groups of students and entire classes. The discussion was supported by materials that had details about the grade level expectations, GLE's, which are State minimum standards which all children must learn during a school year. The teachers provided examples of how they would address Different scenarios, such as students grade level, above grade level or below grade level. The entire FES staff voluntarily participated in all of the multi-age training that has been offered in the District. That means that our staff should be well positioned to use their skills to support multi-age teaching and learning next year. There was also a robust discussion of the need to keep an open dialogue with the children and we as parents must support and model the way in supporting the multi-age classrooms in our school. We as adults must lead by example so our children can feel that they are in a good place, with proper support, and avoid negative comments that on a playground or a bus can not only be mean but very hurtful.

In closing I want to re-thank all of you who have spent many nights in April attending meetings, and many more in the living rooms of friends discussing our little school. I also want to remind you that over the last several months there were many things said, e-mailed, and posted to the web that were hurtful, mean, and counter-productive. There were also some important and necessary things that have been said and issues brought to everyone's attention. Collaboration, cooperation, and accountability will ensure that we move forward from here. You have my unwavering commitment to make sure that it does.

I will host the next meeting with your school Board representative on Monday May 11th from 6-8:30 in the Town Hall. I have been asked to discuss the organizational structure of the District. I will also be available to discuss the PIT, multi-age classrooms at FES, communication with the Town, and your expectations of the District regarding what a good education looks like

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